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REPLY

TO

ALEXANDER HAMILTON's

LETTER,

CONCERNING

THE PUBLIC CONDUCT AND CHARACTER

OF

JOHN ADAMS, Esq.

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

" All seems infected, that the *infected* spy,
" As all looks yellow to the *jaundic'd* eye."

BY A FEDERAL REPUBLICAN.

New-York:

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1800.

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REPLY, &c.

SIR,

A PAMPHLET "concerning the Public Conduct and Character of JOHN ADAMS, Esq." wrote by you, having been recently published in this city, I was induced from the celebrity of your name to give it an early perusal. Unaccustomed to read every thing that is almost daily intruded on the Public, the book before me might yet have been unnoticed, had you not been the avowed Author. Admiring your talents, and having long had an exalted opinion of your integrity and candor, I was fearful that the facts unfolded were of such a nature, as conscious uprightness obliged you to disclose; and that some specific charges were exhibited against Mr. Adams, so serious in their nature; so authenticated and convincing, that the most zealous admirer of the President, even his warmest friends, would mournfully admit; instantly join you and your partizans in hurling this faithful servant—this old and tried

tried Patriot, to contempt and oblivion.—How you have succeeded in your *aim*, will be now our enquiry. You and some others, perhaps, may treat the attempt with derision: discovering, as they will, that the Writer has no claim to an accomplished stile; that all he says is couched in uncouth, inelegant language. He will be branded as possessing more vanity than prudence, in attempting to combat with General HAMILTON, who is emphatically stiled, "the Atlas of Composition:" But, Sir, if I succeed in the investigation, and shew that *Public Good* will not be the result of dividing the Federalists; that evils of a serious magnitude will be produced, I shall willingly submit to the obloquy and derision of you and your adherents.

IN the very introductory pages of your letter, it is asserted, that the President "does not possess the talents adapted to the *Administration* of Government, and that there are great and intrinsic defects in his character, which unfit him for the office of Chief Magistrate.

IN order to justify this *serious charge*, we are told of some *opinions* said to be his: you are not certain they were ever brought home to Mr. ADAMS; but notwithstanding, you wish your readers to believe them; forgetting, that possessing this knowledge, you entered cordially into the plan of supporting Mr. ADAMS for the Presidency. Even the *Opinions* attributed to him, are by no means of so serious a nature as you represent them. Similar sentiments are at this day entertained by high and respectable characters

ters in New-England. At the period they were ascribed to Mr. ADAMS, such ideas were almost universal in Massachusetts; REPUBLICAN sentiments in opposition to a *hereditary king*, and *standing army*.

FROM one extreme we go to the other; in struggling for Independence, Mr. ADAMS possibly adopted ideas, which maturer age and experience might render it necessary to correct: but, Sir, is it not unwarrantable to hold Mr ADAMS *culpable* for any *reported opinions*, which you know not were ever brought home to him.—— Opinions have been ascribed to General HAMILTON, very hostile to the liberties of these States; I believed them to be "*a base, wicked, and cruel calumny.*" Why then disqualify Mr. ADAMS for *imputed* opinions.

IN adjusting the treaty of peace with Great Britain, you ascribe all the merit to Mr. JAY: I suppose, that to the eminent talents of both, we owe great obligations; you are pleased, however, for his decisive co-operation, to grant him much of your consideration and esteem. In this article you certainly do not disqualify him for the Chief Magistracy.

IF you are so destitute of substantial grounds of accusation, that a passage in a private Journal must be resorted to, for the purpose of ridicule, you are wanting indeed: I blush to think Mr. HAMILTON inserted such a bagatelle in his Pamphlet; the injury intended Mr. ADAMS, redounds upon his opponent.

AT

At the first election under the New Constitution, you observe, that it was deemed an essential point of caution, to take care that accident or intrigue should not raise Mr. Adams, instead of General Washington to the first place :— Let the friends of order and good Government be equally solicitous, that *intrigue* does not raise Gen. Pinckney, or *accident* Mr. Jefferson, over Mr. Adams.

In your observations and conclusions upon a private letter, said to be written by the President in 1792, to *one* Tench Coxe, you artfully take it for granted, that all believe what *Duane*, with unwearied diligence has endeavored to impress, viz. that the person alluded to was Mr. Thomas Pinckney, late Minister to the Court of Great Britain ; while it is evident to common sense, that the writer had reference to a gentleman of that name, who was then a member of Congress, at present a senator from South Carolina—a man very different in politics, either to Thomas, or Charles C. Pinckney.

Fortunately, (in confirmation of this assertion) I have just seen Mr. Adams's letter to Mr. Thomas Pinckney, of South Carolina, which clearly proves the fact. Your surmises and conclusions, of course, evaporate into

" ———air, thin air."

Let us now, Sir, examine what you term the versatility of Mr. Adams's career, and see if we can discover in his Administration, such a heterogeneous

erogeneous compound of right and wrong, wisdom and error.

To impress the belief of his versatility, you with more ingenuity than candor, state a *fact*.—Mr. ADAMS having affirmed, that he would not receive a Minister from France—you tell us, in ss than forty-eight hours after, his mind underent a total revolution, by declaring in his speech, hat if France would receive a Minister with due espect, he would send one: Is it so? No, Sir; n the contrary, feeling a lively resentment for he indignities passed upon the Nation, by insulting ur Commissioners of Peace, Mr. ADAMS spirity declared, like a true American, that he never ould send another Minister to France, until he ad assurances, he would be received becoming e representative of a great, powerful, and indeendent nation. Has this sentiment the appearnce of versatility? Does this language imply a tal revolution in opinion? By no means. True is, an unfortunate advantage has been taken of little contemplated, I believe, by Mr. ADAMS. e could not open the page of futurity, and ere read of LOGAN's *Embassy*, and the pains at would be taken to *commit* him.

As you admit the President is not always und to consult the heads of department, why not he, in some instances, act alone?

To indulge once more your propensity for icule, (convinced that solid arguments are nting to effect your purpose) you are reduced the pitiful alternative of conjuring up the

Ghost

Ghost of FREDERICK, of Prussia: Much am I mistaken, if Mr. ADAMS was ever ambitious to be thought a FREDERICK. Superlatively emi-nent as that King's character was, there were traits in it, disgusting to a virtuous and moral man. He entertained ideas, altogether incompatible for the Chief of a *Free People.*

THE President, it seems, nominated Mr. VANS MURRAY, Minister Plenipotentiary to France: the Senate preferred a Commission of Three. This difference in sentiment you eagerly lay hold of, and exultingly exclaim, "*How unseemly was this fluctuation in the Executive Chief! It argues a serious reproach.*"

IF my recollection is not very treacherous, all the nominations of President WASHINGTON were not implicitly complied with, on the part of the Senate: in the case before us, perhaps one Minister was as good as three. It neither argues instability of views, or want of consideration in Governments as great as our's, if not "the *most enlightened* in the world," have intrusted con-cerns of vast national importance to one *negoci-tion*, and successfully adjusted disputes between powerful kingdoms.

WHEN the Envoys were appointed—the instructions in their pockets—a frigate victualled ready to convey them—news arrived of a bust in Paris—that two of the Directors were expel-led, &c. &c. Is that extraordinary? Does not every year bring an account of revolutions in France? Was it to be expected, that our Com-missioners were only to act with those who in

ted them ? Were instructions given to-day, directed to the Chief Consul, the *Mighty* BUONAPARTE—could not the Commissioners negotiate notwithstanding, with "THE *POWERS* THAT BE," should they find the good man had been displaced; or, like MARAT, assassinated during their passage ?

IT is presumed, our views were to accommodate *with France*, not with this or that individual. How preposterous then, to attach such blame to the President for persevering in sending them. To have paused then, would indeed have argued a versatility, unbecoming a President :—Then might your charge of indecision been conclusive; and I will venture to affirm, that had Mr. ADAMS detained the Commissioners, the measure would have met your severest censure.

THAT Mr. ADAMS might have arranged the business otherwise—that he should have sent powers to the Ministers abroad—that he ought to have done this or that, in preference to what was done—are mere suggestions of your own imagination; and Mr. ADAMS was by no means bound to have sacrificed his own judgment, to adopt the opinion, even of Gen. HAMILTON.

ANOTHER charge exhibited against Mr. ADAMS, is his extreme jealousy at meeting Judge ELSWORTH, Gov. DAVIE, and yourself, at the the same period in Trenton: We are at a loss, however, to think how Mr. ADAMS could be alarmed at meeting Messrs. ELSWORTH and DAVIE, previous to their embarkation for Europe;

we should naturally believe it was his wish to see them, and that he had expressly requested it. The natural and innocent solution which you have given of it, convinces me, Mr. HAMILTON must be mistaken; and that his jealousy could not arise from seeing the Commissioners there.

YOUR extravagant conjectures respecting the dismissal of the Secretaries, are vague and unnatural, and cannot have much weight with men of reflection. If our first and best men are to be hurled from their high stations, on no better grounds—Alas, for the Government!

THE friends of General HAMILTON did not suffer their minds to be warped at the many stories industriously propagated against him; if they had, well might you have exclaimed—Oh, the ingratitude of Republicans!

THE Secretary of State yet lives in the esteem of a large proportion of the sound part of the community: Mr. ADAMS, I doubt not, yet venerates and loves him. What are the supposed causes of his dismissal? Simply these: The Secretary possessing a warm constitution, feels such indignation for the injuries heaped upon his country by *regenerated France;* believing them as bad as they are, could not brook the idea of giving them an opportunity to injure us afresh. Mr. ADAMS, as President of America, consults and ponders for the nation: feeling it a duty to conform somewhat to the prejudices of part of the people, he thought he consulted his country's best interest, taken collectively, in acting as he did:

did: and it was the bounden duty of Mr. PICKERING, filling the office of Secretary of State, to have acquiesced, or resigned: doing neither, reduced Mr. ADAMS to the painful necessity of dismissing him. But, admitting a violent breach was made in their friendship, Mr. PICKERING, as Secretary of State, was the organ of the President; and duty of office required certain submissions:—Notwithstanding, you justify a rude behavior, declaring, "he could not practice condescentions to an imperious Chief."

IN detailing the causes which occasioned the dismissal of the Secretary at War, you state one, so extremely unnatural, that many will hesitate before they believe it; viz. that the President "charged Mr. M'HENRY with having *eulogized* Gen. WASHINGTON."

THAT a remarkable harmony did subsist between the late and present Presidents, is a fact well known. His several communications to Congress on the mournful event of Gen. WASHINGTON's death; his consolitary letter to the bereaved Widow; and indeed his language for many years past, all correspond to impress the belief, that he much esteemed that venerable Sage.

WHY are efforts made from St. Croix to St. Mary's; and why is the whole "HELL OF DEMOCRACY" in motion, to effect a change in our government, but because Mr. ADAMS, the friend and confident of WASHINGTON, firmly adopts his system. With these glaring facts before us, are we now to be told that Mr. ADAMS dismissed

missed the Secretary at War, for eulogizing Gen. WASHINGTON? Well might you think that many of your readers would believe the story *incredible.*

THE last charge against the President, is the pardon of FRIES and others, principals in the late insurrection in Pennsylvania; every commonly informed man knows the fact that you have stated, viz. that the laws of the Union, in that State have often have been violated: In two instances discontent broke out, into open resistance; the first in the Western Counties, during the administration of President WASHINGTON; and the other last Autumn: But how you can think of impressing the opinion that the latter was the most formidable and dangerous, is to me wonderful; because it is notorious, that the western rebellion was more alarming to the general government than the insurrection in Northampton county. In the western counties, opposition assumed a menacing attitude; an organized system of defiance which threatened the very existence of the Union: So serious was it grown that WASHINGTON, the man whom you declare did nothing rashly, "WASHINGTON who consulted much, pondered much, and resolved slowly," deemed it necessary to raise an army of 5000 men, collected from the Potowmac to the Hudson, to quell them; and indeed, it was highly proper. For in corroboration of the dangerous tendency of the rebellion, you assure us that the late Gen. MIFFLIN himself, (speaking of the Western opposition,) told you that insurrection was organized to the very liberties of Philadelphia, and but for the army raised

to

to oppose them, a general explosion would speedily have ensued."

It cost the United States more than a million to restore order, notwithstanding "Washington yielding to special considerations" pardoned the culprits. In Northampton county a number of ignorant Germans, gourded on by some nefarious incendiaries, were taught to believe, that the general government was about to ruin them by taxes; and not understanding the principles of the law, "laying an income on houses," they supposed it introductory to some greater evil: Hence the opposition to the commissioners; and hence the rescue from the marshal which is known to every one.

To intimidate such daring proceedings for the future, and bring to trial the principal actors in the mischief, a military force was necessary; but the number of men called into service, bore no proportion to what marched to Fort Pitt; nor, did the troops when they arrived at Bethlehem find any persons in arms. Fries and the others that were carried to Philadelphia, were taken at home: fines and imprisonment were adjudged against several who were active, but Fries more daring than the rest, (though an ignorant man,) was found guilty of Treason and sentenced to *death*. Mr. Adams, anxious to spare, also "*yielded to special considerations*" and pardoned him. Yet we are told Mr. Adams was extremely culpable, and doing of it constitutes one of *your* high charges against him.

HAVING now followed you through, we are asked, are your arguments not weighty; and if they do not *exculpate you from all blame of being influenced by private resentment?* Candidly, Sir, with me they do not; and, I trust, few that reads your Letter unbias'd will think otherwise.

AWARE that *some* might suppose you influenced by *private resentment* you admit that you have causes of *personal dissatisfaction* with Mr. ADAMS; and to prove the assertion, proceed to state certain particulars, among others, that you was appointed *second* in rank at the *immediate* request of Gen. WASHINGTON, but why should you personally dislike Mr. ADAMS for not wishing you in that station? There are older Major Generals yet living, who perhaps, thought they were entitled to that honour, supposing *partiality*, (somewhere) had placed you over them.

As to your being appointed to the vacancy of Lieut. General no one I believe, ever *dreamt* of it: WASHINGTON himself was merely appointed, because a crisis appeared approaching, which might require all the energies of the Union to combat; and it was known that the name of WASHINGTON alone, at the head of our armies, would itself be a HOST.

AT the period of his death, the alarm of invasion had greatly subsided, and it was believed by many that the disbandment of the troops was not far distant; of course a successor was totally unnecessary.

BUT *if* (as you assert) Mr. ADAMS *has* calumniated you, if he has suffered his mind to be biassed by any unfounded report, he ought to make you every reparation. The best of men often err in judgment; even your favorite candidate may have his faults; perhaps as much clamour would hereafter be raised against him, were he elected, as *now exists* about Mr. ADAMS.

UPON the whole, in reviewing all the proofs you have exhibited of the imbecillity of our Chief Magistrate, still am I of the opinion, that ADAMS is the man to *rally round*. Among the worthies of America I know of none more deserving our confidence and support.

CHRISTIANS of every denomination will wish him re-elected, for Mr. ADAMS is a professed Christian—and has not been ashamed in his public acts to address the Throne of Grace, humbly imploring the blessing of God upon this nation—all good men who have their country's cause at heart, will be anxious to see him continued in the *Chair*. For to be instrumental in promoting the happiness of America, Mr. ADAMS has laboured for more than forty years.

WHAT! shall we at this critical period of nations cast him off?—No—are not the enemies of peace and good order marshally in array? Are not their satellites sewing discord and misery from the extreme of the globe to the other, glorying in the success that has hitherto crown'd their *hellborn* schemes, and calculating that similar causes will produce similar effects; already they count

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us as subdued, whetting their beaks for our blood, and if they succeed our ruin is inevitable.

THE horrid tragedies that have been play'd in *France*, may soon be acted over again here—the very recollection of which chills the blood in my veins. Nothing but the united efforts of the Good and Virtuous can save us from destruction.

CINCINNATUS.

BRITISH MUSEUM

ERRATA.

In the 8th Page, 10th line from the bottom—for *Negociation* read *Negociator*.